# HyperCard's "stackware" promises explosion of applications

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BOSTON — When HyperCard hits Des Moines, there's going to be pandemonium in that city's users' groups.

That was the prediction of one analyst who had seen the application in action. There may be a similar reaction among software developers as the commercial possibilities of HyperCard are realized.

Hand in hand with the unveiling of HyperCard will be at least five announcements of "stackware" products. Stackware is the term used to describe software add-ons to HyperCard.

HyperCard has been seeded to 100 developers, some of whom will show stackware products at Mac Expo.

Of these, at least two programs are aimed at the business market: Business Class, a graphics-oriented travel guide aimed at the business traveler, and HyperDesk, a client/project-deadline manager. Both were designed by author Danny Goodman and published by Activision. Each two-disk set sells for less than $100.

Dialog Information Services will be using HyperCard to provide a graphic log-in and consistent search formats for its on-line data services. The Whole Earth company is working on a stackware catalog, said Apple representatives. Borland International also will be incorporating HyperCard features in SideKick.

Accounting firms Arthur Young and Peat Marwick have received copies of HyperCard.

If HyperCard finds a place in the business arena, it will probably be as an inexpensive and easy-to-use alternative to database and on-line data services, according to analyst Bill Langenes of Creative Strategies of San Jose, Calif. Langenes said he estimates there will be roughly 100 stackware products on the market by the end of the year and 1,000 by the end of 1988.

Although two-thirds of these may be shareware, Langenes said, he expects that at least five major traditional publishing companies will get involved in marketing stackware, centering on the business and training arenas.

Claris, Apple's spinoff software company, will not be an active developer of stackware, said John Zeisler, vice president of marketing.

Since the programming language, called HyperTalk, incorporated in HyperCard is very "English-like," actual Macintosh software programming will become far less complicated.

Apple has already made an effort to promote the stackware market by seeding HyperCard to developers as well as to 20 higher-education institutions.

Although these developers only received the product six weeks ago, at least five stackware products will be ready by Mac Expo, and at least 10 more projects are under development. No technology license is required to market a product based on HyperCard, classified by Apple as basic Macintosh technology.

But some analysts and developers think the precedent that Apple has set with HyperCard for low-cost software will scare away developers who are not interested in a product for which there may be minimal profit margins.

To promote the new class of authors and developers it anticipates will spring up around HyperCard, Apple has set up a seven-pronged program, including a certified developer program, technical support, evangelism and seeding, co-marketing support, and distributor and publisher "matchmaking."

The target markets, in Apple's opinion, are educators, courseware developers, instruction and training designers, libraries and information services.

"The ultimate marketplace is massive, potentially the size of the installed base of the Macintosh," said Peter Black, president of Xiphias, a company that is producing a stackware series called Time Table of History, in essence a HyperTalk encyclopedia.

"HyperCard will spawn a whole different industry, run by people more concerned with editorial judgment than with bits and bytes," Black said.

While writing a book about HyperCard, Goodman was smitten with ideas about how to use HyperCard in his own business. The results of his ideas will be exhibited at Mac Expo.

Goodman said he feels the market for stackware is potentially a very lucrative one. "Someone who is willing to take the calculated risk will do very well," said Goodman.

He also said, however, that commercial stackware will have to compete with shareware. "Even if a piece of stackware has the most spectacular information-handling abilities in the world, if it has amateurish-looking graphics, it won't have any perceived value," Goodman said.

Potential problems for stackware developers, Goodman said, will include the temptation to turn out products without adequate testing due to the ease of programming and resistance from retailers unwilling to provide technical support for a product without a large markup.

Other hidden traps awaiting future stackware authors, according to Black, are licensing complications arising from the use of graphics and sound. "There's almost nothing [in these areas] that isn't licensed," said Black. ■

# Electronic Whole Earth Catalog

**Classification:** Catalog
**Title:** The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog
**Publisher:** Broderbund Software, Inc.
**Replicator:** PDO
**System:** Apple Macintosh Plus, SE, II
**Search Software:** Hypercard
**Price:** $149.95

**Pluses:** Spare-time absorber. Find the unfound. Great fun.
**Minuses:** HyperCard/CD-ROM slowness
**Description:** This is one of those application CD-ROMs which you acquire not because you have real need for it but rather because you feel you will be a better person if you spend some time with it. Intuitive, really, except that the memory of your 15-year-old **Whole Earth Catalog** (print edition) may jump yearningly to the recall section of your brain.

Like its printed predecessor, **The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog** is a compendium of the universal, a listing of everything erudite, altruistic, and obscure...sometimes far-fetched and remote, but never without a valid, useful connection to the real world.

There are approximately 9,500 HyperCard Cards covering 2,500 items reviewed, and including 4,000 pictures, 2,000 text excerpts, and 500 sound bytes. There is a marvelous indexing of all this information, so that one can access those areas of particular interest. For example, the twelve major areas are entitled: Whole Systems, Community, Place, Household, Craft, Livelihood, Health, Nomadics, Communications, Media, Learning, and Music. Each of these main areas is broken down...for example, the "Whole Systems domain" includes sub-areas Space, Gaia, Evolution, Ecology, Animals, Civilization, and Plants. Each of these sections breaks down into clusters of articles that are more or less related.

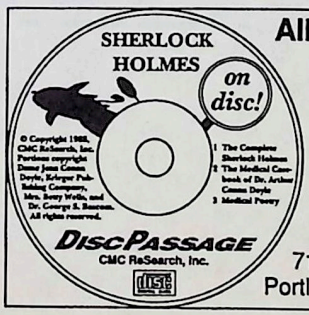
You can spend your time just browsing around through the index or you can enter with a purpose via a search string. Either way, you will run into four types of information cards. The review card contains the text of a particular review, introduction or commentary. The access card gives you complete (as can be discovered) information for ordering the book, product, catalog, etc., being reviewed. It most often has a picture of the product on this access information card.

The excerpt card gives you a taste of the item being reviewed. This may be a look at the text if such is involved. It may also be a sound byte, such as a bird song, music selection or reading. The picture card is a visual type of excerpt card giving a picture which may be extracted from the item being reviewed. It generally has an overlay of text information from the HyperCard system which can be temporarily removed with a mouse click.

Perhaps the handiest feature is the Order Form which is accessed inside each article. This form is in the shape of a purchase order addressed to the resource. Included is space for your credit card number which you enter into a personal HyperCard database file, along with your name and mailing address. At the click of a couple of mouse buttons your order for the product is compiled and printed with a cover letter with your signature. About the only thing missing is an envelope. Maybe this will be taken care of in the next version.

Through **The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog** you can get an L.L. Bean catalog, subscription to ETC., the journal of the International Society for General Semantics, or recordings of bird songs from the Department of Ornithology at Cornell University.

Whatever your special personal persuasions, I cannot imagine that they are not addressed in great detail in this CD-ROM application. If you budget your investment in CD-ROM applications by dividing product cost by the amount of time it is used, this will undoubtedly be the biggest CD-ROM bargain available.

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